Abstract of the Disclosure

In a method for effecting protection of a digital communications system having N communications units and K protection units, the protection units are initially set up by storing in memory in the protection units the configuration data relating to the communications units. Subsequently, when a fault occurs involving one of the communications units, it is only necessary for one of the protection units to be supplied with an indication of which communications unit is involved, upon which the protection unit accesses in memory the configuration data associated with that unit and uses those data as its own configuration data. By this means the protection unit assumes the role of the fault-related communications unit with very little delay. Once the fault has been rectified, the protection unit has its own configuration data restored and the fault-related communications unit is put back into service. The method is envisaged as finding major use in an SDH communications system employing a 1:N protection scheme.

(Fig 3)